

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

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SUBJ: PARLIAMENT EXTENDS MARTIAL LAW OVER RPP'S OPPOSITION

REF: A. ANKARA 3379; B. ANKARA 2528

SUMMARY: STUDENT DISTURBANCES CONTINUE TO BE A POLITICAL ISSUE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION. PARLIAMENT'S CONSIDERATION OF MONTHLY EXTENSION OF MARTIAL LAW IN FOUR KEY PROVINCES, WHICH HAS BEEN FAIRLY ROUTINE SINCE BEGINNING OF CYPRUS CRISIS LAST JULY, THIS TIME TOUCHED OFF STRONG CRITICISM BY OPPOSITION. SMALL-SCALE DISTURBANCES MEANWHILE ARE CONTINUING. END SUMMARY.

1. ON APRIL 30 PARLIAMENT APPROVED THE EXTENSION OF MARTIAL

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LAW FOR ANOTHER MONTH (BEGINNING MAY 4) IN THE PROVINCES OF

ADANA, ANKARA, ICEL AND ISTANBUL. INTERIOR MINISTER ASILTURK TOLD PARLIAMENT HE WELCOMED THE RESUMPTION OF THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS ON CYPRUS BUT, WITHIN TURKEY, "SUBVERSIVE DECLARATIONS, BOYCOTTS AND OCCUPATIONS DESTROYING THE FREEDOM OF EDUCATION" WERE CONTINUING. "THE PRESENT DOMESTIC AND EXTERNAL CONDITIONS NECESSITATE THE EXTENSION OF MARTIAL LAW," HE CONCLUDED. HOWEVER, FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER HASAN ISIK, SPEAKING FOR THE OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP), SAID MARTIAL LAW WAS NO LONGER NEEDED AS IT HAD BEEN DURING THE CYPRUS CRISIS AND HE CRITICIZED THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT FOR ATTEMPTING TO USE MARTIAL LAW AS AN INSTRUMENT OF DOMESTIC POLICY. EARLIER, RPP DEPUTY HUSEYIN KECELI, IN ANNOUNCING THE DECISION OF THE RPP JOINT PARLIAMENTARY GROUP TO OPPOSE THE EXTENSION OF MARTIAL LAW, SAID: "THE RPP OBJECTS TO THE ARMY'S INTERVENTION IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS."

2. SEPARATELY, PRIME MINISTER SULEYMAN DEMIREL ISSUED A WRITTEN STATEMENT REPLYING TO RPP LEADER BLUENT ECEVIT'S COMMENTS CHARGING THE GOVERNMENT WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECENT INCIDENTS OF STUDENT VIOLENCE (REF A). AMONG OTHER THINGS, DEMIREL SAID: "THE RPP CHAIRMAN HAS MADE IT HIS POLICY TO OPPOSE THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE MEASURES WHICH WILL STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNMENT... BY NOT OPPOSING ANARCHISTS AND THOSE WHO WANT TO TURN THE STATE AND GOVERNMENT INTO THE MARXIST ORDER, THE RPP CHAIRMAN HAS SHOWN ONCE AGAIN WHICH SIDE HE IS ON AND WHAT HE IS OPPOSING."

3. ON MAY 1 DEMIREL AND OTHER CABINET MINISTERS HELD A MEETING WITH DIRECTORS OF 13 TURKISH UNIVERSITIES (REF A). DEMIREL

WAS AFTERWARDS QUOTED BY THE PRESS AS SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE "EVERY MEASURE" TO RESTORE SECURITY ON THE CAMPUSES AND REITERATED HIS VIEW THAT NO ONE COULD "SNATCH AWAY" THE RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION FROM THOSE WHO WANTED ONE.

4. STUDENT DISTURBANCES CONTINUE APRIL 29-30 WITH REPORTED INCIDENTS IN ISTANBUL, ANKARA, AND ADANA. MEANWHILE, THE STATE SECURITY COURTS IN ANKARA AND DIYABAKIR BEGAN THE TRIALS OF TWO SEPARATE CASES RESULTING FROM RIOTS WHICH ERUPTED IN EASTERN TURKEY LAST FEBRUARY. IN THE CASE BEFORE THE ANKARA COURT, INVOLVING 81 DEFENDANTS IMPLICATED IN THE TOKAT DISTURBANCES, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR HAS CHARGED THAT THE INCIDENTS WERE ORGANIZED AND PROVOKED BY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP), THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) AND THE EXTREME RIGHTIST ULKU OCAKLARI YOUTH ORGANIZATION. BOTH LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST EXTREMISTS ARE AMONG THE 102 DEFENDANTS ON TRIAL BEFORE THE DIYARBAKIR COURT ON CHARGES CONNECTED WITH THE OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE IN ERZINCAN.

5. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT HAS ANNULLED CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY LAW WHICH WERE DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH STUDENT DISTURBANCES. THE ARTICLES REPORTEDLY ANNULLED HAD DENIED AUTONOMOUS STATUS TO THE BLACK SEA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IN TRABZON AND ATATURK UNIVERSITY IN ERZURUM AND HAD AUTHORIZED THE GOVERNMENT (ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE) TO TAKE OVER THE ADMINISTRATION OF A UNIVERSITY IN THE EVENT OF SERIOUS DISTURBANCE.

6. COMMENT: THE EXTENSION OF MARTIAL LAW FOR ANOTHER MONTH APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CONTINUATION OF STUDENT DISTURBANCES THAN TO THE CYPRUS SITUATION. WHILE THIS ACTION LENDS CREDIBILITY TO THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT'S CLAIMS THAT IT WILL TAKE "EVERY MEASURE" TO DEAL WITH OUTBREAKS OF STUDENT VIOLENCE, THE GOVERNMENT CAN EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER THE CONTINUED VOCAL OPPOSITION OF THE RPP TO THE USE OF MARTIAL LAW POWERS IN PUTTING DOWN DOMESTIC DISTURBANCES, SEVERAL ACADEMIC SOURCES, WHILE REFRAINING TO DATE FROM SIDING WITH ONE GROUP OF STUDENTS AGAINST ANOTHER, HAVE EXPRESSED TO US DISSATISFACTION WITH THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS' HANDLING OF LEGITIMATE STUDENT GRIEVANCES, THEREBY PROVIDING A PRETEXT FOR FURTHER DISTURBANCES.

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